

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please cancel claims 6 and 15 without prejudice or disclaimer. }

Please amend claims 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13 and 14 as follows:

1. (Currently Amended) A utility knife comprising:
a housing;
said housing having a forward portion, a rear portion,
and a middle portion;
a cutting member;
said cutting member being attached to said forward
portion;
said rear portion, including a grip for enabling a user
to grasp the knife with a hand;
a pivot wheel;
said pivot wheel being attached to said middle portion;
at least a part of said pivot wheel being received inside
said housing with only a portion of said pivot wheel extending from
said housing for balanced engagement between said cutting member at
said forward portion and said pivot wheel at said middle portion of
a surface to be cut by application of force on said forward portion

and said middle portion whereby the knife is stabilized during use about said pivot wheel.

2. (Currently Amended) A utility knife ~~as set forth in Claim 1~~ wherein comprising:

a housing;

said housing having a forward portion, a rear portion, and a middle portion;

a cutting member;

said cutting member being attached to said forward portion;

said rear portion, including a grip for enabling a user to grasp the knife with a hand;

a pivot wheel;

said pivot wheel being attached to said middle portion;

a least a part of said pivot wheel being received inside said housing whereby the knife is stabilized during use;

said housing includes including first and second sides;

each of said first and second sides including a wheel track for receiving said pivot wheel.

3. (Currently Amended) A utility knife ~~as set forth in Claim 1~~ further including comprising:

a housing;

said housing having a forward portion, a rear portion,
and a middle portion;

a cutting member;

said cutting member being attached to said forward
portion;

said rear portion, including a grip for enabling a user
to grasp the knife with a hand;

a pivot wheel;

said pivot wheel being attached to said middle portion;

a least a part of said pivot wheel being received inside
said housing whereby the knife is stabilized during use;

an opening extending through said middle portion;

said opening being adapted to receive the an index finger
of the user.

4. (Currently Amended) A The utility knife as set forth
in Claim 3, wherein said wheel is in the a shape of a ring having
a rim; said rim is located adjacent to said opening.

5. A The utility knife as set forth in Claim 4, further
including a curved hub wall inside said housing and extending about
said opening; said rim of said wheel is located adjacent to said
hub wall and engaging at least a portion of said hub wall during
use of said knife.

6. (Cancelled)

7. (Currently Amended) A utility knife ~~as set forth in~~
~~claim 6~~ wherein comprising:

a housing;

said housing having a forward portion, a rear portion,
and a middle portion;

a cutting member;

said cutting member being attached to said forward
portion;

said rear portion, including a grip for enabling a user
to grasp the knife with a hand;

a pivot wheel;

said pivot wheel being attached to said middle portion;

a least a part of said pivot wheel being received inside
said housing whereby the knife is stabilized during use;

said knife being adapted to cut a work piece;

said rear portion including a protruding section separate
from said grip;

said protruding section being adapted to protect the hand
of the user grasping the knife from contacting the work piece;

said protruding section includes including a skid plate.

8. A The utility knife as set forth in Claim 1, further including a storage compartment in said housing; said storage compartment is adapted to receive spare cutting members.

9. (Currently Amended) A utility knife ~~as set forth in Claim 1 wherein~~ comprising:

a housing;

said housing having a forward portion, a rear portion, and a middle portion;

a cutting member;

said cutting member being attached to said forward portion;

said rear portion, including a grip for enabling a user to grasp the knife with a hand;

a pivot wheel;

said pivot wheel being attached to said middle portion;

a least a part of said pivot wheel being received inside said housing whereby the knife is stabilized during use;

said housing ~~has~~ having first and second sides and a mechanism for securing said first side to said second side;

a storage compartment in said housing;

said storage compartment being adapted to receive spare cutting members;

a rotation mechanism for enabling said first and second sides to rotate relative to one another to a second position so that said storage compartment is accessible to the user;

said storage compartment being covered by said first and second sides when said first and second sides are in a first position relative to one another.

10. (Currently Amended) * The utility knife as set forth in Claim 9, wherein said rotation mechanism, including a stud attached to and projecting from said first side and a curved track in said second side; said stud is received in said curved track; said stud is enabled to move along said curved track.

11. (Currently Amended) * The utility knife as set forth in Claim 9, further including a lock/release mechanism; said lock/release mechanism enabling said first and second sides to be locked into said first position and released to be placed in said second position.

12. (Currently Amended) * The utility knife as set forth in Claim 11, wherein said lock/release mechanism includes a push button release mechanism and a locking notch.

13. (Currently Amended) A utility knife comprising:

a housing;
said housing having a forward portion, a rear portion and
a middle portion;
a cutting member;
said cutting member being attached to said forward
portion;
said rear portion, including a grip for enabling a user
to grasp the knife with a hand;
said middle portion, further including an opening
extending through said middle portion;
said opening being adapted to receive the an index finger
of user;
said middle portion including a stabilizer pivot
structure.

14. (Currently Amended) * The utility knife as set forth
in claim 13, wherein said rear portion with protruding section
includes a skid plate.

15. (Cancelled)